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(1) Editorial: America and Muslims -- We welcome a "new beginning"

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
June 5, 2009

Immediately after the terrorist attacks on the United States (in September 2001), then President George W. Bush used the word "crusade" to signal a military response. The Muslim world, which fiercely fought with the Crusades during the 11th to 13th centuries, uses "Red Crescent" in place of the Red Cross, abhorring the word "cross." It is undeniable that President Bush's inadvertent use of the word "crusade" has given an anti-Muslim impression to the attacks on Afghanistan and the war in Iraq.

In addition to his slip of the tongue, President Bush drew fire not only from radical Muslims but also from moderate Muslims for his policies. As a result, relations between the United States and the Muslim world became icier than before.

In view of such developments, President Barack Obama has delivered landmark speech calling for a "new beginning." The speech came about

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due to the cooperation of Cairo University and Al-Azhar, which is said to be the head temple of Islam, President Obama declared that the United States will never be at war with Muslims. He also presented a noteworthy historical view that Muslims make up a part of the United States.

Mutual understanding with Muslims was necessary for the Bush administration's war on terror, as well. Needless to say, terrorism must be condemned. Nevertheless, if grassroots-level anti-American sentiments in the Middle East are left unaddressed, terrorism cannot be eradicated. Such a view is believed to be at the root of American experts' strong call for an effort to bring peace to the Palestinian autonomous region. But the Bush administration did not actively try to respond to that call.

Referring to the pain of both Palestinians and Israelis, President Obama supported in his speech the coexistence of two states based on the establishment of a Palestinian state and the security of Israel. Although he stopped short of making any concrete proposals, the President also urged Palestinians, including Hamas, a radical Muslim group, to put an end to violence, while criticizing the expansion of Israeli settlements. Further, in contrast to the Bush administration, which was said to be clearly tilted toward Israel, President Obama expressed strong concern for the "humanitarian crisis" in Gaza, which was attacked by Israel.

The United States is a strong ally of Israel. At the same time, it has been a self-claimed mediator of Middle East peace. We hope the Obama administration will move actively to find a way out of the current deadlock in the situation in the Palestinian region.

President Obama announced his administration's readiness to conduct an unconditional dialogue with Iran, which has been pursuing a secret nuclear program. He also said that no specific political system should be imposed on other countries. This can be taken as a step toward reconciliation by bidding farewell to the Bush administration's Middle East democratization vision and the regime-change argument.

But unless trust in America is restored, any Middle East policy would end up as pie in the sky. Following his Prague speech calling for a nuclear-free world, the President's ability to implement policies will be tested.

(2) Review of U.S. military bases overseas being considered under new Obama administration defense strategy

TOKYO SHIMBUN ONLINE (Full)
10:59, June 5, 2009

Kyodo, Washington

Gen. James Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, gave a speech at a think tank in Washington on June 4 where he pointed out the need to review the location of U.S. military bases overseas. He indicated that the new strategy will be included in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) to be issued in February 2010.

This is the first time that a senior U.S. Armed Forces officer has mentioned specific contents of the next QDR, which will outline the Obama administration's security strategy.

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Cartwright said that "the present military bases overseas are located where they were when we fought Japan and Germany." He stressed that the war in Iraq and Afghanistan "will continue for at least another five to 10 years," calling for a change in thinking on operational concepts from World War II or during the Cold War. It is believed that he also had in mind the U.S. Forces Japan realignment, including the transfer of U.S. Marines in Okinawa to Guam, currently being undertaken by the Japanese and U.S. governments.

Cartwright talked about the following proposals for a new strategy for overseas military bases: (1) construction of additional permanent bases; (2) rotation of troops stationed overseas; and (3) reinforcement of mobile units. Regarding a response to combat operations that have expanded to a global scale, he also said that, "The present strategic bombers are too slow, and the procedures are too cumbersome."

(3) USMC's top brass implies revisions to Futenma relocation plan

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Full)
Eve., June 5, 2009

Hiroshi Marutani, Washington

U.S. Marine Corps Commandant Conway, who is the USMC's top commander, indicated in his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee during a hearing on June 4 that the U.S. government could even go over the planned realignment of U.S. forces in Japan. "We have a modified plan that is worth considering," Conway stated, referring to the Japanese and U.S. governments' concurrence on their plan to relocate the U.S. military's Futenma airfield. The realignment plan is to move 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam.

This is the first time that a U.S. military leader has touched on the possibility of modifying the realignment plan. Conway voiced his "support" for the agreement reached between the Japanese and U.S. governments. Even so, he clarified that it would be indispensable for Futenma airfield's alternative facility to have functions that are about the same as Futenma airfield. At the same time, he also pointed out that there were problems about the Futenma relocation, specifying that the Guam relocation cost would exceed its initial estimate.

In addition, Conway suggested the need to take consistency with a review of other overseas bases in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) to be released in February next year. He did not rule out the possibility of renegotiating with the Japanese government and revising the U.S. force realignment plan in the end.

(4) SDF brass likely to get key posts in Defense Ministry's internal bureaus

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Abridged)
June 4, 2009

The Defense Ministry yesterday revealed a plan to restructure its organization in the wake of scandals involving its personnel. According to the revealed plan, the Defense Ministry will appoint staff officers from the Self-Defense Forces to pivotal posts in its internal bureaus. Specifically, the Defense Ministry is going to enhance the functions of its Defense Policy Bureau with a new lineup

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of three deputy directors general. The Defense Policy Bureau currently has only one deputy director general post, which has been filled by the Defense Ministry's bureaucrats. One of the two newly planned deputy director general posts is to cover international affairs and is to be filled by a person who will be seconded on loan from the Foreign Ministry, and the remaining deputy director general post is a slot for SDF staff officers. In addition, the Defense Ministry plans to set up a Strategy Planning Division in the Defense Policy Bureau to study and plan mid- and long-term defense strategies.

The Defense Ministry will also install a new bureau that will integrate the defense buildup planning functions of its internal bureaus and the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces' staff offices. The newly planned bureau's director general will be appointed from among the Defense Ministry's bureaucrats, and its deputy directors general from among Defense Ministry bureaucrats and SDF staff officers. The directors of divisions in the Defense Policy Bureau and in the newly envisaged bureau for defense buildup planning will be appointed from among SDF staff officers as well.

The Defense Ministry will enhance its policy planning functions in an aim to meet changes in the security environment, such as North Korea's nuclear and missile development, China's military power projection, and more frequent overseas missions for the SDF. The Defense Ministry's restructuring initiative to combine its bureaucracy and the SDF's brass is also expected to face objections from within itself.

(5) LDP recommends enemy base strike capability with election in mind? Experts: LDP "using the people's indignation," "trying to get attention"

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 24) (Full)
June 5, 2009

Katsumi Sekiguchi

The term "capability to attack enemy bases" has come out again from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The idea is to attack the enemy's missile bases and so forth in order to remove the threat before Japan is attacked. It is understandable to say that this is meant to counter North Korea's long-range ballistic missiles and other weapons. But is that all?

Since April, North Korea has fired a long-range ballistic missile, as well as conducted its first nuclear test in three years and embarked actively on other military activities.

In light of this, the LDP's subcommittee on defense policy adopted a recommendation on the need to possess the capability to attack enemy bases on June 3. This recommendation will be presented to the government shortly through the party's National Defense Division.

A search in the database of the Diet's minutes shows that deliberations on the concept of "enemy base strike capability" date back to over half a century ago at the House of Representatives Committee on the Cabinet in 1954. There was little discussion at that time, but when the Taepodong-1 was fired in 1998 and the Taepodong-2 in 2006, there was lively debate on "whether this should be considered an option."

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However, this did not result in any concrete proposals, such as a policy recommendation. Yet, this time, it is being turned into a

formal proposal just like that.

Military journalist Tetsuo Maeda says cynically: "The LDP is mindful of the next House of Representatives election."

He adds that: "North Korea's actions unmistakably came as a tailwind for those who want Japan to possess an enemy base strike capability. On top of that, the public shares their indignation against North Korea. (The LDP) has probably brought out this issue, taking advantage of this indignation, to serve their political maneuvering and the Lower House election campaign."

"They probably do not really believe that making this a major point of contention in the Lower House election can restore the popularity of the Aso administration and the LDP, but they might be able to awaken latent feelings of affinity toward the LDP. North Korea, in effect, is helping the LDP."

Politicians should not forget the weight of their words

Political commentator Harumi Arima agrees with Maeda: "There is certainly an idea in the LDP that with the election approaching, talking about measures to counter the DPRK will win them support." He reveals an episode he heard from a bigwig LDP Diet member.

A well-known hawkish Diet member was invited to lecture at a study meeting of lawmakers who were elected for the first time in the 2001 House of Councillors election. He asked the participants what should Japan's future foreign and security policy be. This hawkish Diet member was surprised that a majority answered, "We will be studying this from now on, but it should be 'an eye for an eye'."

Arima points out changes in the Diet members' disposition over time.

"In LDP in the past, Lower House members elected for three terms became parliamentary vice ministers and those elected for five times became Diet committee chairmen or cabinet ministers. Diet members went through training in policy. But what you have today is TV politics. They do not work on refining their ideas and tend to just say something smart without much thought instantaneously."

He voices his criticism of Nagata-cho: "For sure, there are political issues like postal privatization that come with pain on the part of the people, but no Japanese gets hurt no matter how much you talk about enemy base strike capability. Therefore, they have brought this up lightly, trying to catch attention before the election."

He adds that: "Foreign and security policies are the result of the accumulation of long years of efforts. Politicians should not forget the weight of their words."

(6) In meeting with Korean National Assembly chairman, DPJ Hatoyama says change in government will renew ties with South Korea

TOKYO SHIMBUN ONLINE
June 5, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama met with

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Korean National Assembly Chairman Kim Hyong-O in the Diet Building in Seoul this morning after arriving in South Korea. Hatoyama expressed his eagerness to seize political power in the next House of Representatives election, saying: "A change of government will allow us to turn a new page of relations between Japan and South Korea." Kim replied: "Many people expect you to play a major role in the future."

In reference to the issue of Japan's view of its wartime history, Hatoyama emphasized: "It is important for the two countries to push ahead with a future-oriented policy while looking back over our past in a cool-headed manner, instead of uselessly inflaming nationalism." Kim echoed Hatoyama's remark.

The visit to South Korea is his first overseas trip in his new role. Hatoyama will meet President Lee Myung-bak in the afternoon. He aims to establish a relationship of trust with the President. Hatoyama is expected to exchange views with Lee on security in Northeast Asia following North Korea's nuclear test and missile launch. Hatoyama intends to seek Lee's cooperation in pressing North Korea to denuclearize itself.

(7) LDP in turmoil over restrictions on hereditary Diet seats

ASAHI (Page 4) (Almost full)
June 5, 2009

Takebe retracts previous remarks; Suga impatient

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) tried to restrict hereditary candidacy beginning with the next House of Representative election, but the party then easily overturned its own policy. Although the LDP attempted to counter the main opposition Democratic Party (DPJ), it has now given the impression of being in turmoil. Some LDP members are casting chilly glances at Reform Implementation Headquarters Chairman Tsutomu Takebe and Election Strategy Council Deputy Chairman Yoshihide Suga, who led the argument on hereditary candidacy.

At an expanded senior meeting yesterday of his Reform Implementation Headquarters, Takebe withdrew his previous remarks that hereditary Diet seats should be restricted, starting with the next general election. He said in the meeting: "I don't want to do anything that is aimed at the next election."

At a meeting on May 13 with junior Diet members, Takebe explicitly said: "If we restrict hereditary candidacy, we should introduce such in the next election, not in the one after the next." At another meeting of the Reform Implementation Headquarters, Takebe distributed a draft report stipulating that the restrictions should be started with the next election.

Takebe told reporters yesterday: "I have not at all said 'starting with the next election' or 'beginning with the election after the next.'" However, a headquarters member said, as if to have given up, said: "He is wavering. He should consider his official position, not his personal position."

Meanwhile, Suga, who quickly presented the hereditary issue in the LDP, is impatient. One of the faction leaders criticized these moves, saying: "This means the reform efforts have backslid." Suga might lose his influence in the party if no improvement is seen in

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the issue.

Suga wants the LDP to prohibit relatives within the third degree of kinship from running in the same electoral district, but he suggests excluding LDP lawmakers serving as prefectural chapter chief from the restriction targets. A group of junior lawmakers close to Suga agreed with Suga's plan in a meeting yesterday. Suga's prediction is that his proposal will be able to fend off public criticism if the introduction of the restrictions is put off to the election after the next, as well as to avoid resistance and confusion in the LDP by excluding the second son of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi from the targets.

Some in the LDP have said that Suga and Takebe should take responsibility for (turmoil) in the party."

Prime Minister Taro Aso has left the matter to the LDP, saying: "I want the LDP to carry out thorough discussion." The hands-off approach by Aso and the LDP leaders, including Secretary General Hiroyuki Sonoda, has spurred the uproar.

Since there are many hereditary lawmakers in the LDP, "it is wrong to step up into the DPJ's ring," said (former cabinet minister). The LDP's effort to demonstrate the changing LDP likely will end in failure.

Former Prime Minister Koizumi's son to be excluded

When will the LDP introduce the restrictions on hereditary Diet seats? Since Takebe has dumped the issue on the party leadership, the proposal by the Suga-led group of lawmakers calling for restricting the hereditary candidacy will become material for further discussion.

For fear of negative reaction from the public, the proposal states that the restrictions would be introduced in the future, which leaves open the possibility that the restrictions will be applied beginning with the next general election. The proposal states that the LDP would exceptionally endorse Shinjiro Koizumi, Kanagawa No. 11 electoral district, who has become LDP chapter chief succeeding to his father, Junichiro, who has announced his resignation at the end of his term as a Lower House member, and Shoichi Usui, Chiba No. 1 constituency. The proposal also includes that the LDP would not endorse relatives of Diet members, who will announce their retirements from now on, as LDP candidates to run in the next general election.

However, the LDP informally endorsed candidates for most of the 300 single-seat constituencies last fall when the possibility of the dissolution of the Lower House becoming strong. It has yet to endorse candidates for two constituencies: the Tochigi No. 3 and Miyazaki No. 1. Therefore, the impression that cannot be erased is the implementation of the restrictions has been forgone.

Takebe said in a speech on June 1: "I think Shinjiro Koizumi will run in the next general election as an independent." In order to dodge the public reaction, he appears to be aiming at solving the issue in the form of Shinjiro declining the LDP's endorsement.

Shinjiro's office replied to a question by the Asahi Shimbun: "We refrain from making from a comment." Shoichi Usui is, however, expected to be endorsed by the LDP. He appears to be breathing a

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sigh of relief.

(8) Senior LDP officials jittery about signature campaign to speed up holding of presidential election; Some mid-ranking, junior members positive

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
June 5, 2009

Daisuke Kondo

House of Representatives lawmaker Taku Yamamoto recently started a signature campaign to demand that the party presidential election be held early. Nobutaka Machimura, who chairs his own faction in the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) met with faction member Yamamoto in Tokyo on June 4 to ask him to refrain from continuing with this campaign. However, Yamamoto has told reporters confidently that "quite a number of signatures have been collected," indicating he intends to continue the campaign. The faction leaders appealed for party unity at general meetings of the factions on June 4, but there are a number of mid-ranking and junior members who support his move. A source of trouble for "Aso's downfall" is simmering in the background.

Machimura summoned Yamamoto to the faction's office before the general meeting and reprimanded him sternly: "You said this is not meant to 'topple Aso' but you are disrupting party unity in effect. This is a critical period before the election, so you should be careful about your behavior." After the meeting, Yamamoto attended an executive meeting of the faction to argue that "this is not a campaign to topple the cabinet." When senior faction officials reproached him, he countered with: "If that's what you are saying, then expel me." Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was alarmed by the exchanges, wrapped up the argument with: "This is an action based on Mr Yamamoto's personal political beliefs. The faction has absolutely nothing to do with it."

Yamamoto is 56 years old and was elected from the second district of

Fukui. In the 2006 presidential election, he supported former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, who was considering running at that time, and prided himself on being a "close aide of Fukuda." However, he formed a study group critical of the administration with former secretary general Hidenao Nakagawa and others in June 2008 during the Fukuda administration and was criticized for engaging in "divisive activities."

Faction leaders, who want to give top priority to party unity in the run-up to the next Lower House election, are clearly annoyed by Yamamoto's activities. Bunmei Ibuki, chairman of the Ibuki faction, expressed his displeasure at a general meeting on June 4: "There is sure to be an election within three months. We need to unite as one." Former state minister for administrative reform Koki Chuma echoed his sentiments: "We can simply ignore him."

Yamamoto has not set a deadline for his signature campaign. In case of changes in the political situation, such as the LDP's defeat in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election (on July 12), there is a possibility that the number of supporters may grow.

Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki, who distances himself from the administration, talked to reporters about this campaign on June 4. He said that, "It will depend on developments

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from now on," leaving the possibilities open. One junior lawmaker says: "I cannot affix my signature but I share Mr Yamamoto's thinking."

(9) Manufacturers still saddled with excessive jobs, facilities, according to Finance Ministry's statistics

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)
June 5, 2009

Manufacturers posted a combined pretax loss in the January-March period for the first time since the survey started in 1954, according to the Financial Statements Statistics of Corporations released by the Finance Ministry yesterday. Signs of improvement in production and exports are emerging, but manufacturers are still saddled with excessive workers and facilities, as shown by the fact that labor's relative share of income marked a record high. To increase domestic demand, a key factor in putting the economy on a sustainable recovery track, it is imperative to lower the rising unemployment rate and boost stalled capital investment.

The total amount of sales of all companies in the January-March period shrank 20.4 percent below the level for the same period a year ago to 311 trillion yen, and pretax profits decreased 70.1 percent to 4,107.4 billion yen, both marking the largest ever rates of decline. Manufacturers posted a loss of 2,246.2 billion yen as exports of transportation machines and telecommunications equipment sharply dropped.

Even so, there are indications that the recession is grinding to a halt. The industrial production index showed monthly improvements in March and April, and the figure for the April-June quarter may surge by about 10 percent over the previous quarter. Corporate earnings are also expected to improve. JP Morgan Securities Japan Co. employee Masaaki Sugano said: "The manufacturing industry might see its balance go into the black again in the October-December period."

The volume of production remains at only about 70 percent of the level marked last fall. Many people familiar with the situation predict it will take a considerable amount of time before a full recovery will occur. There are signs of corporate earnings recovering, but listed firms that closed their books in March forecast lower sales and profits this fiscal year for the second year in a row. Under this situation, a stable earnings recovery is not expected until fiscal 2010 or later.

The annual demand shortfall for the Japanese economy is estimated to be a record 45 trillion yen, highlighting excessive payrolls and facilities.

Labor's relative share of income has reached an all-time high of 72 percent (an estimate by NLI Research Institute). Labor expenses in the January-March period dipped 7.8 percent below the same period a year ago, but there is still stronger pressure to cut jobs. Machinery orders (private demand, excluding ships and electricity), which serve as a leading indicator for capital investment, are expected to drop for the fifth straight quarter in the April-June period. Appetite for capital investment remains weak.

To bring the Japanese economy back onto a solid recovery track, it is essential to spur domestic demand, such as personal consumption

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and capital spending. But excessive employment and facilities stand in the way of such efforts. Signs of improvement in the economy are emerging, but structural coordination efforts, such as reducing jobs and shutting down plants, are likely to continue for the time being

(10) Prime minister to release mid-term goal to curb global warming on the 10th; Government searching for common ground with deadline close at hand

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Abridged slightly)
June 5, 2009

Japan's effort to set a mid-term goal to cut green house gasses, an issue that will take the centerstage of talks to discuss a framework to curb global warming to be put into force in 2013 and after (post-Kyoto Protocol talks), is reaching its final stage. The government plans to make adjustments, based on a plan to cut emissions by 14 PERCENT in comparison with the 2005 level (7 PERCENT cut from the 1990 level). Prime Minister Taro Aso is expected to release Japan's plan on July 10. However, cabinet ministers are showing signs of disagreement with an eye on the next Lower House election. Various countries have started making adjustments. The deadline is drawing near.

Setting a mid-term goal is not the focus of the post-Kyoto Protocol framework talks. It also determines Japan's economic activities for the next 10 years. The 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP15) to be held in December, following the July G-8 in Italy, is the deadline for settling the post-Kyoto Protocol framework talks. The 14 PERCENT cut in comparison with the 2005 level, which will serve as the basis for consideration, is based on the figure indicated by former prime minister Yasuo Fukuda last year as a feasible estimate. Many government officials are of the opinion that this figure will serve as a benchmark, as a senior Cabinet Secretariat official put it. The reduction rate would increase, if emissions quota purchased from abroad and emissions absorbed by forests are included in the numerical target, as approved under the Kyoto Protocol.

With upcoming election in mind

Differences in views of related sources still remain. Masahiro Tabata, chief of the New Komeito Headquarters to Curb Global Warming, met Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura at the Kantei and asked for a further emissions cut, noting: "Environment Minister Tetsuo Saito is in favor of a 15 PERCENT -25 PERCENT cut in comparison with the 1990 level (21 PERCENT -30 PERCENT cut in comparison with the 2005 level). We support it." A substantial emissions cut is a pet argument of the New Komeito, which gives priority to environmental conservation. Some say that the New Komeito is conscious of the Democratic Party of Japan, which calls for a 25 PERCENT cut in comparison with the 1990 level (30 PERCENT cut in comparison with the 2005 level) with the envisaged election in mind.

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) at a meeting of the Global Warming Countermeasures Headquarters on the 3rd worked out proposals but was unable to come up with a specific figure. While those who are positive about cutting emissions, including former foreign minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, called for a 13 PERCENT -23 PERCENT cut in comparison with the 2005 level, commercial and industrial policy clique members, who do not like the idea of setting a strict goal,

cannot be ignored. The Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren), which supports the LDP, is in favor of a lenient goal of a 4 PERCENT cut, compared with the 2005 level. As such, it is impossible to set a clear position, if the upcoming election is taken into mind.

Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshihiro Nikai at related ministers' conference checked the environment minister's proposal for approving a substantial cut, saying, "The goal must be feasible." Justice Minister Kaoru Yosano, who is in charge of economic and fiscal policy as well as financial services, echoed his view, "An ambitious goal looks attractive, but it will impose burden on people." Participants in the cabinet meeting only agreed to make 1990 the base year to be used for comparison of emissions cut.

Post-Kyoto Protocol framework: Various countries showing positive stance with aim of enhancing their influence; Japan searching for ways to team up with US

European countries and the U.S. are making a positive appeal on their mid-term goals at the Bonn UN climate Change Talks. Their aim is to enhance their influence in the post-Kyoto framework.

The European Union (EU) came up with a goal to cut emissions by 20 PERCENT in comparison with the 1990 level to be achieved by 2020. It has even indicated readiness to raise the target to 30 PERCENT, if other countries come up with similar goals. The U.S. has revealed a goal to cut 14 PERCENT in comparison with the 2005 level. It will come out even in comparison with the 1995 level.

Those goals fall short of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) call for a 25 PERCENT -40 PERCENT reduction by industrialized countries as a whole. Dissatisfaction is lingering among developing countries. China is calling on industrialized countries to slash emissions by more than 40 PERCENT, compared with the 1990 level, by 2020. If Japan comes up with a small reduction rate, it could weaken its influence, drawing fire from other countries.

A pattern of the group of Japan and the U.S., Europe and Developing countries being opposed to each other is emerging over participation by developing countries in the post-Kyoto framework. Japan has asked emerging countries to set a specific goal, including improving energy efficiency. The present Kyoto Protocol only mandates industrialized countries to set an emissions reduction goal. Japan has proposed a plan to include emerging countries as well. The U.S. has also released a plan to call on developing countries that emit a large amount of carbon dioxide, such as China and India, to set a reduction goal by 2020. This is close to Japan's proposal in that it calls for imposing obligation on emerging countries, demarcating them from developing countries.

Both Japan and the U.S. have a domestic circumstance that they are unable to persuade domestic industries with a framework under which their rival nations - China and India - are not obligated to cut emissions. As such, they both have come up with a proposal that is harsh to emerging countries. On the other hand, the EU has just hinted at imposing a reduction effort goal on developing countries. It has apparently given priority to reaching an agreement on the post Kyoto-Protocol framework at an early date.

Japan teamed up with the U.S. in the 1997 talks to formulate the

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the House Foreign Affairs Committee that handled the resolution, came from California's 12th district. He said that the committee would adopt the resolution if House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would support it. Pelosi came from California's 8th district.

Chinatown sits in the 8th district where there is a large Korean community as well. The Asian-American population accounts for 29 PERCENT of the total population of the 8th district. The ratio in Lantos' constituency is about the same. In other words, both Lantos and Pelosi could not ignore the Asian-American voters in their respective districts.

Numerical strength is a source of political power. The number of Japanese-Americans, who had been very powerful up until the 1980s, has been gradually shrinking. A survey conducted in 2007 by the Census Bureau showed that the number of Chinese-Americans was 3.54 million, followed by Korean-Americans at 1.56 million, while that of Japanese-Americans was 1.22 million.

Further, Japanese-Americans are mostly middle-class and are dispersed, while Chinese-Americans are concentrated in Chinatown and Korean-Americans in Koreatown. This allows them to wield significant influence in elections.

"Korean-Americans have also been working hard to build political power since the 1990s," the aforementioned journalist said. Their efforts were triggered by the Los Angeles Riots of 1992 in which Koreans were attacked. They were terrified by the indifference of the white-dominated American society rather than by the fact that they had been attacked. Back then, Jerry Yu of the Korean American Coalition said in a newspaper interview: "The American people's response is cold because we, Korean-Americans, do not have political power."

Since then, Korean-Americans have built up their political power as their numbers increased. Their efforts have been successful, and the House adopted a resolution condemning Japan for sexual slavery. The Korean Times said on Feb. 11, 2009: "Korean-American power is small but growing and increasingly influencing American politics. The Korean-American community is a new frontier for Korea."

What deserves attention is a Japanese researcher's observation: "Korean-American and Chinese-American forces are actively playing the role of not only increasing their social position in the United States but also of sending out their home countries' political messages." I do not know of any story about the Japanese community in the United States having conducted activities for the sake of Japan.

No interest in Japan

Japan's power is declining not only in politics but also in the academic field as well.

The number of Japan experts has drastically dropped at the Brookings Institution and other research institutes. Such opinion leaders as Harvard University Professor Ezra Vogel, who wrote Japan as Number One, Fred Bergsten and Adam Posen, who used to actively analyze the Japanese economy, have now shifted their interest to China. In the United States, think tanks play an extremely significant role. The number of researchers studying only Japan has clearly decreased.

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Meanwhile, the Korea Foundation, armed with abundant funding, has successfully increased South Korea-related courses steadily at universities and colleges.

The same phenomenon is seen in younger generations as well. According to a professor teaching Soseki Natsume at a well-known Midwestern university, students these days do not study Japanese literature. The professor, who is an acquaintance of mine, lamented, "To increase the number of students, I was told by the university to teach animated films." Times have clearly changed since the 1980s when students not only in the literature and history departments but also those in law and business schools competed to study the Japanese language.

The number of American students studying overseas provides a clear view. About 10,000 American students were studying in China in 2006, in contrast to about half of that number in Japan. In other words,

they have no interest in Japan to begin with.

This is evidence of the absence of Japan's national policy to promote exchanges of young people. In fact, it is little known that the number of Japanese students in the United States is also on the decline. The aforementioned journalist took this view: "It is a reflection of Japan's lack of strategic vision on how to commit itself to the United States. That has resulted in Japan's shrinking presence in the United States."

The other day, a staffer at the U.S. Embassy in Japan said, "Senior officials recently dispatched from Washington have little command of Japanese." In the State Department, the group of people who are eager to study Japanese to become Japan experts is obviously shrinking. Today, an American version of "China School" is reining supreme in the section responsible for Asian affairs.

Japan is pitifully losing its influence in the United States. That might be unstoppable. Influential pro-Japanese individuals are not likely to emerge in the future.

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